



Jennie C. Hunter-Cevera, Ph.D.

Acting Secretary, Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC)

Jennie Hunter-Cevera, Ph.D., Acting Secretary of the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) was appointed by Governor Larry C. Hogan on January 21, 2015. As chief executive of Maryland's postsecondary education coordinating agency, Dr. Hunter-Cevera advises the Governor, MHEC Commission and legislators on policies, initiatives, and issues pertaining to higher education. She provides policy leadership for fifty-five colleges and universities, eight regional higher education centers, and one hundred and forty-three private career schools within the state; oversees the agency budget, including the State's Financial Aid and Grants programs; and, the approval process of new academic programs. Other responsibilities include deciding on institutions seeking to operate in Maryland; overseeing the implementation of the State Plan for Postsecondary Education and providing leadership to the Commission staff.

Secretary Hunter-Cevera works collaboratively with advisory councils, established by law to study and make recommendations to the MHEC Commission. Councils include the Financial Assistance Advisory Council, comprised of statewide financial aid directors; the Segmental Advisory Council includes leaders of the University System of Maryland; community colleges; independent institutions including Morgan State University, St. Mary's College of Maryland; and private career schools; the Faculty Advisory Council, comprised of faculty representatives from various institutions; and the Student Advisory Council, comprised of a representative from each degree-granting institution in Maryland. These groups help to formulate Maryland's education policies in partnership with the Secretary and the MHEC Commission.

Prior to her appointment, Dr. Jennie Hunter-Cevera was the founder of Hunter and Associates, a consulting firm focusing on finding integrative solutions to complex problems in the life sciences arena that include sustainability issues. Her 22 years of experience in the pharmaceutical and biotechnology industries include work with E. R. Squibb and Sons, Cetus Corporation, GeoBiotics and Universal Foods. She founded both The Biotic Network and Blue Sky Laboratory and spent five years as the head of the Center for Environmental Biotechnology at the E.O. Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory. In addition, she served for ten years as the president of the University of Maryland Biotechnology Institute. From 2009-2012, she was the Executive Vice President of Discovery and Analytical Sciences, Government Relations, Public Relations and Corporate Development at RTI International, a non-profit government contract research institution.

Dr. Hunter-Cevera holds 15 patents in the area of natural products. She is the author of many scientific papers and has presented many keynote lectures and served as both moderator and panelist on various aspects of biotechnology both in the national and international arenas.

She has also served as president of the Society for Industrial Microbiology (SIM), the International Marine Biotechnology Association and the United States Federation of Culture Collections. Most recently, she was Chair of the National Research Council's committee on large-scale production of biofuels from algae. She has chaired two other NRC committees and served as Senior Editor of the Journal of Industrial Microbiology and Biotechnology for ten years. She currently is on the editorial board of Industrial Biotechnology and was the guest editor for the October, 2014 issue.

Dr. Hunter-Cevera served on the Maryland Industrial Partnerships Advisory Board, MDBio's Board of Directors, MDBio Foundation and BioT Coalition. In addition, she sat on the Executive Committee of Governor Erhlich's transition team and his committee on science, technology, engineering and math. She was the technology representative for Governor Glendening to the Southern Governor's Association and served and chaired the Maryland Technology Economic Development Corporation Board of Directors. She currently is the Chair of the Board of Directors for the Center for Policy on Emerging Technologies.

She is the recipient of several awards and honors, including Maryland's Top 50 Influential People and Top 100 Women. She received the Porter Award from the American Society for Microbiology (ASM) for distinguished research in microbial systematics and taxonomy. She was also elected as a SIM fellow, a member of the ASM Academy of Microbiology and an American Association for the Advancement of Science fellow.

Dr. Hunter-Cevera completed a Bachelor's in Biology and a Master's in Microbial Ecology from West Virginia University. Having received her Doctorate in Microbial Physiology and Biochemistry from Rutgers University, she was named a WVU Distinguished Alumni, Nath Lecturer, and presented with an Honorary Doctorate Degree from the Eberly College of Arts and Sciences in May of 2012.